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PERFORMING ARTS SOCIETY OF ACADIANA

BACKSTAGE PASSES

WWW.PASA-ONLINE.ORG

STUDENT GUIDE

Just what is this “a cappella”?

Traditionally, “a cappella” simply means “without accompaniment.” In other words, no instruments, just voices. A cappella has been around for quite some time – just consider much of the music heard in churches during mass. Other prominent examples are the renowned Vienna Boys’ Choir and the scores of Barbershop quartets that have enjoyed popularity throughout the years. Although it was seldom thought of as a front runner on the musical scene, a cappella began to gain fame in the 1980’s and 1990’s. According to a 1997 report on National Public Radio’s Morning Edition, “Since 1980 the number of collegiate a cappella groups in the U.S. has tripled, and since 1990 the number of professional groups has quadrupled.” The public radio sector was not the only one to take notice. That same year, CNN, The New York Times, and The Washington Post all carried pieces hailing the new popularity of a cappella. A cappella was not just gaining popularity. It was also taking on a new form. Gone were the religious music, the sweet barbershop harmonies, and the traditional doo wops. In their places were groups who embraced modern music, the modern world, and all it had to offer musically. A cappella made a splash on the pop music charts with the success of the group Boyz 2 Men in the early 1990’s. In recent years, more African and ethnic music has appeared on the a cappella scene, and groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo have garnered international acclaim. And then, of course, there was Rockapella, the group that was unafraid to sing on commercials, game shows, or on the Folger’s float in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. A cappella had a new agenda and a new feel. Many music watchers say that this shift in a cappella subject matter has left the music industry and gone on to infect college groups, which have been known for clinging to old-school styles and music. A cappella, it seems, will not die. It is just waiting for its next incarnation. Check out the website www.singers.com for loads of a cappella information and links to other a cappella groups.

TOXIC AUDIO

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 9
2008

TOXIC AUDIO BY THE NUMBERS:

A Closer look at “a musical experience unlike any other”

Toxic Audio is described again and again as “original” and “unique.” Trying to nail down just one way to describe such an unconventional group is of course, not easy. Therefore PASA suggests using numbers to nail down a description of this fascinating group. Read on, and see what Toxic Audio is all about.

Number of members in the group: 5

Years working together as “the Toxins”: 10 (the group formed in 1998)

Years spent performing at Disney/MGM studios: 1, but they performed a whopping six shows each day, and crowds of over 3000 people attended these shows

Totally awesome acts the Toxins have opened for: At least 3 (on the list are Tony Bennett, Kenny G, and Wayne Brady from “Whose Line is it, Anyway?”)

Grammy Nominations: 1 (for their contribution to a recording of the musical Hair)

Fabulous national awards won: At least 7.

Recent wins include

- Winning “The Best Pop Group In America” from Ed McMahon’s Next Big Star
- Being crowned the year 2000 Harmony Sweepstakes National Champions
- Claiming the Lillie Stoates Award for Best Musical
- Winning the 2003 CARA Award for “A Cappella Album of the Year” for the album Chemistry Toxins
- Voted the 2005 CARA “ARTIST of the YEAR!”
- Taking the prestigious Drama Desk Award for the “MOST UNIQUE THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE of 2004” for their 7-month Off Broadway smash run at the John Houseman Theatre
- Awarded the A Cappella Community Award 2006 for the following areas: Favorite Pop/Rock Group, Favorite Humor Group, Favorite Professional A cappella Album, Favorite Female Vocalist, Favorite Vocal Percussionist, Favorite Songwriter



Adjectives one can use to describe Toxic Audio and their Performance:

Endless. These high-energy performers are always amazing, highly creative, classy yet unexpected, and thoroughly entertaining for audiences of all ages. A few glowing reviews are:

- “Surprising, dazzling and brilliant,” and “Toxic Audio will raise the hairs on the back of your neck and thrill you to the marrow!” –The Orlando Sentinel
- “Pitch-perfect humor! I’m a Toxic fan!”
–Paul Shaffer,
The Late Show with David Letterman
- “They mount musical miracles!”
–The Village Voice

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

GET PHYSICAL

1.) You can experiment with and model the different voice types – and all you need is a thick rubber band. First, slip a few fingers into the rubber band and stretch it so that it forms an oval. Pluck the band, and you should get a deep, penetrating vibration. This is the bass sound. Stretch the rubber band a bit further and pluck it again. You have now created a baritone! Now keep on stretching and plucking. Can you make your rubber band a high tenor?

2.) Don't have a rubber band? This same experiment can be carried out with water glasses and a kitchen knife. Take four glasses and fill them with different amounts of water. One should be nearly empty, another one-third full, one half full and one nearly full. By tapping these glasses very gently with the knife, you can create a whole range of sounds. Try playing a favorite tune!

VERY VISUAL

Toxic Audio has been through a lot of changes since its birth at the Orlando International Fringe Festival. Use the internet to research the group's history. Create a timeline showing some of the changes the group has been through and the high points on their journey to fame.

ENTIRELY AUDITORY

Listen to Toxic Audio with your eyes closed. Can you pick out the different voice types and the vocal drum beats? Make a list of what you recognize.

WRITE ON

1.) Compare the beat sounds made by vocal percussionist Paul Sperrazza to the beat boxing you hear in rap and hip hop. How are these sounds the same or different? Create a chart or paragraph explaining your answer. Focus on recognizing similarities and differences.

2.) Many of the members of Toxic Audio have had unusual jobs: model, acrobat, and party clown. However, all of these performers have found ways to use their talents and make them into careers. Consider your talents and interests. What do you like to do that you could make a career (even an extraordinary one) out of? Research and write an essay on what your talent is, what training you would need to take it to the next level, and how you could make yourself a success.

FIVE FAST (AND FASCINATING) FACTS ABOUT THE TOXINS

The self-proclaimed "Toxins," or Toxic Audio members, are known for being unique and unconventional as performers. Considering that their group's slogan is "Exploring the Boundaries of the Human Voice," it may not come as a surprise to learn that the Toxins are unafraid to incorporate many musical styles (jazz, country, R&B are all mentioned in their range of abilities), comedy, and vocalized sound effects not suitable for the classroom into their performances. The Orlando International Fringe Festival, now famous for launching Toxic Audio, warns all visitors that acts remain experimental and uncensored. As special as the festival that gave life to their careers, the toxins have a wealth of amazing talents and skills that extend well outside their musical realm.

JEREMY JAMES, BARITONE, "FUNKY IMPROV MASTER"

- Holds a B.S. in Advertising from the University of Florida.
- Can juggle three paperback books for a very short time.
- Is a professional model who has shot for Nike, Kodak, and Tupperware.
- Surfed 15-foot waves in El Salvador and lived to tell about it.
- Starred in many theatrical productions including Beau Jest, The Gifts of the Magi, and Forever Plaid.

SHALISA JAMES, ALTO, "SOUL SISTER"

- Earned a degree in Broadcast Communication from the University of Central Florida.
- Crowned Miss UCF in 1989.
- Works as a professional jingle singer who has recorded over 500 regional and national spots.
- Has the following phobias: fear of fishing, fear of drinking soda from the can, and fear of wearing socks and sandals.
- Played sing-a-long piano at Pat O'Briens and The Gaylord Palms Resort.

MICHELLE MAILHOT-VALINES, SOPRANO, "SCAT GIRL"

- Holds a Bachelor of Music-Jazz Studies from Western Michigan University
- Names chocolate mousse as her favorite dessert.

- Is a professional vocal instructor who has taught Phil Mattson vocal jazz workshops and Disney Sings Clinics.
- Loves talking to her mom on the phone.
- Has the following phobias: Fear of being late, Fear of bad hair days, and Fear of long-distance bills.

RENE RUIZ, BASS, "BARRY WHITE AND BARRY MANILOW VOCALS"

- Studied Music Education at the University of Texas.
- Once sang back-up for Barry Manilow.
- Was a featured emcee at Disney World who has interviewed many celebrities including Geena Davis, Howie Mandell, and Don Knotts.
- Directed and starred in several theater productions including West Side Story, Fiddler on the Roof, and Forever Plaid.
- Has a black chow named Buddy who can fetch his own leash when it's walk time.

PAUL SPERRAZZA, SOUND EFFECTS, "HUMAN BEAT BOX"

- Earned a vocal performance scholarship to Valencia College in Orlando, Florida.
- Is a professional acrobat who has been used as a human jump rope.
- Played the role of "Jinx" in the show Forever Plaid.
- Has been a bus boy, bell boy, art dealer, security guard, and party clown.
- Can hit a screaming high E flat.

ODD, BUT SKILLFUL CAREER CHOICE: BEATBOXING

Beatboxing, also known as the art of vocal percussion or mouth drumming, has gained in popularity lately. Beatboxing is sometimes called the "fifth element" of hip-hop, and with the rise of hip hop most music listeners have become familiar with the sounds of the base drum, snare drum, and cymbal as they appear when recreated by the human voice. However, when one looks closely at beatboxing, its history extends far and wide and moves beyond the realm of hip-hop.

HOW TO BEATBOX:

1. First, learn the three basic sounds and the beat

The basic sounds are:

- classic kick drum {b}: say the letter b (as in bogus) with a short lip oscillation (made like blowing a raspberry). Practice letting pressure build up in closed lips before releasing the sound and letting your lips vibrate in the oscillation for a short time only.
- hi-hat {t}: make a t sound with your teeth closed or lightly closed and your tongue forward, behind your front teeth
- classic snare drum {psh}: make a p sound while oscillating your lips, or blow out while making a ph sound

2. Then, Combine the three sounds into an 8-beat such as this: { b t psh t / b t psh t } or {b t psh t / b b psh t }
3. Concentrate on getting the timing right. If you make a mistake, keep going, do not stop or pause.
4. Start off slowly and build up speed once you can do the 8-beat without losing timing.
5. Check out <http://www.wikihow.com/Beatbox> many more tips on how to teach yourself beatboxing and links to the careers of famed beatboxers like Bobby McFerrin (singer of "Don't Worry, Be Happy) and American Idol Finalist Blake Lewis.

A Capella by the Decades Since the formation of the Yale Whiffenpoofs (a spin-off of the famed Yale Glee Club) in 1909, American a cappella has had a continuous presence on the music scene. The word "barbershop" is first associated with a cappella the next year, in 1910, and goes on to define one of the most popular styles a cappella singing. Although a cappella has technically existed since the beginning of time, it has been most organized and recognized in the past 70 years. Read on – the chart below combines a cappella history with American history for well-rounded picture of this century.

Decade	A Capella Facts	Historical Events
1930's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Capella has always existed in churches – since the beginning of time, church music has been sung in chorus without musical accompaniment. Especially during the Depression, an era where there is an absence of everything, churches rely on well-known hymns that congregations can all join in on.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Great Depression rages and the average American income is reduced by 40%• President Franklin Roosevelt gives "Fireside Chats" to the nation via radio• Mystery Novels and the Yankees baseball team enjoy nationwide popularity
1940's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Sweet Adelines (later re-named Sweet Adelines International) are formed. This all female vocal group gave women the right to be a part of barbershop quartets and is still going strong today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great Depression ends• World War II dominates• Antarctica is discovered to be a continent• The Supreme Court rules that African Americans do have the right to vote
1950's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chordettes have a huge hit with "Mr. Sandman," and become the first female barbershop group to cross over and become pop stars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Cold War rages• Baby Boom Begins• Jonas Salk develops the polio vaccine• Rosa Parks refuses to give up her seat on a bus• Alaska and Hawaii become US states
1960's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The popular musical "The Music Man" includes an a cappella moment with famed group The Buffalo Bills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Rights Movement is going strong• President John F. Kennedy, his brother Robert Kennedy, Civil Rights leader and Martin Luther King, Jr are assassinated• Men walk on the moon for the first time• Summer of Love & Woodstock
1970's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Nylons, Sweet Honey in the Rock, and The Manhattan Transfer all form. Eventually, all of these groups will focus on an a cappella sound.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vietnam war rages and mass protests rock the nation• President Nixon struggles with Watergate
1980's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bobby McFerrin releases his first "one man a cappella" album, and then his hit single "Don't Worry, Be Happy."• A Cappella mega-group Rockapella forms.• A trend of at least 20 new a cappella groups forming in colleges each year takes root late in the decade.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• President Reagan works on ending the Cold War with Russia• Number of single parent families increases• "Shop till you drop" becomes a way of life for some• Sandra Day O'Connor joins the Supreme Court• PUNK is in!
1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spike Lee's "Do It A Cappella" airs on PBS• Boys II Men release the tremendous hit "It's So Hard to Say Good-Bye to Yesterday," which stays on the Billboard charts 133 weeks.• Rockapella releases albums in the US and Japan and appears on Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operation Desert Storm• The World Wide Web is born in 1992• Grunge rock and grunge styles have their day• Bill Clinton's presidency is marked by controversy
2000's	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A cappella touches the mainstream: The Standards win the Family Act title at Destination Stardom, five o'clock shadow finishes second in VH1's Unsigned Band contest; 4:2:1 wins NextBigStar.com's Pop Music Duo or Group contest, with Toxic Audio finishing second• Toxic Audio earns rave reviews for the off-Broadway show Loudmouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downloading revolutionized the music industry• Bill Gates becomes a household name• George W. Bush and Al Gore battle it out to see who will become president

Get Webby and Learn More.

- Check out:
- <http://www.toxicaudio.com/meet.htm> for full biographies of all the Toxins.
 - <http://www.myspace.com/officialtoxicaudio> Yes, Toxic Audio has myspace. Use the internet to determine what other musical artists have myspace and how they use it.
 - <http://www.hardlyfamous.com/> to learn what famous people did before they were stars. This is a great topic for a report or an oral presentation.

Check Out What You've Learned!

After reading the "A Cappella By the Decades" section, complete the following by filling in the missing words. All missing words can be found in the puzzle below.

S Z A K N F C A I D U Z P A G
T B A R B E R S H O P E V R Y
H S E H C R U H C H L T E W E
G O N D M H O C K A X A M F S
I T I A J F H D L P T O I Y T
R R F L M X T L U D L W K P E
L T R U O C E M E R P U S L R
I A G Z V P I P R O I A O M D
V F Q T A P R S C H V U K U A
I C Y K R E N Q U L D C T W Y
C M C C S T C G T M V Z S F D
C O G S C M N V O E E W P J R
R J I F F G O U E B R H S V Z
M O S X V B T W S Q A F T O R
N K X I I H T W J P B X R O W

1. _____ releases albums in the US and Japan and appears on Where in the World is Carmen San Diego?
2. A Capella has always existed in _____.
3. In the 1930's, the _____rages and the average American income is reduced by 40%.
4. The word _____ is first associated with a cappella the next year, in 1910, and goes on to define one of the most popular styles a cappella singing.
5. In the 1950's, Jonas Salk develops the _____ vaccine.
6. The popular musical _____ includes an a cappella moment with famed group The Buffalo Bills.
7. In the 1980's, Sandra Day O'Connor joins the _____.
8. Boys II Men release the tremendous hit "It's So Hard to Say Good-Bye to _____," which stays on the Billboard charts 133 weeks.
9. In the 1960's, the _____ Movement is going strong
- 10.Toxic Audio earns rave reviews for the off-Broadway show _____.

VOICE TYPES 101:

Male voice types:

A somewhat rare male voice is the **high tenor**. A high tenor can hit notes that most men can not. His voice is more flexible and able to imitate a female's. High tenors or often included in groups for artistic effect. In a comic opera, a man might deliberately sing in a super-high voice called a falsetto to get a laugh out of the audience.

Tenors are traditionally known as being the highest male voice type. In many forms of musical theater, tenors take the leading male role. Tenors have been the source of much interest and media attention in recent years – ever heard of “The Three Tenors”?

A **baritone** is the mid-range male voice type. Baritones has a complex role. They blend into the mix of other voices and instrument tones. In musical plays, the baritone can be either the villain or a prankster.

The lowest male voice type is the **bass**. The bass voice produces a throaty rumble. Think of a pounding, drum-like sound. While basses sometimes play comic roles in musical theater, they are more often seen as wise old men.

Female voice types:

The *coloratura soprano* is the highest range of the female voice. Think of the highest note Mariah Carey can hit and keep on thinking. This girl can hit such high notes that she can shatter glass.

A *soprano* is a high female voice. The heroine of the opera is usually a soprano. As you might imagine, she is usually in love with the main man, who tends to be a tenor. Some sopranos have a reputation for wanting things just so, so they are known as *prima donnas*.

If a female *mezzo-soprano* plays the part of a young boy (say Romeo in Romeo and Juliet or Hansel in Hansel and Gretel), her part is referred to as a “*pants role*.” Makes sense, ya’ know? Cause right then that girl is sure the one wearing the pants in that family!

An *alto* is a female performer with a lower voice. If an alto's voice is super-low, she becomes a *contralto* and her voice is very much like the tenor's. Contraltos often get the parts of wise old women and witches. Yes, it's stereotypical, but that's how it goes...

Do's & Don'ts OF GOOD THEATER BEHAVIOR

The Basic rule of behavior: Theater behavior falls somewhere in between that expected for a church and a movie. If you wouldn't do it in one of the above don't do it here.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

DO turn your cell phone off.

DON'T eat or drink in the theater unless refreshments are sold there.

DO sit in your assigned seat.

DO arrive on time.

DON'T disturb those around you (even if you are bored).

DON'T sing along at an opera or musical.

DON'T shout rude things at the performers. Treat them as you would want to be treated if you were onstage.

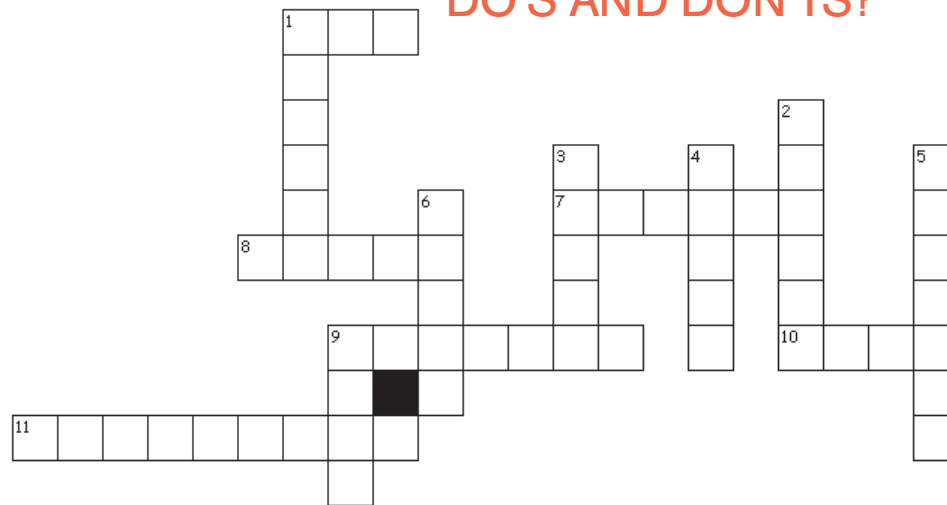
DON'T forget to enjoy yourself and learn new things.

DO remain in your seat until intermission.

DO clap at the end of an act, a scene, after a wonderful moment called a “*show-stopper*”, or at the end of a production. If you are unsure, clap when others do.



Good Theater Behavior: DO YOU KNOW THE DO'S AND DON'TS?



ACROSS

- Clap at the end of a _____.
- Good theater behavior falls between that expected for a _____ and for a movie theater.
- Always remember to _____ new things.
- Clap after an especially amazing part in the play called a “show-_____.”
- The only time you should leave your _____ is during intermission.
- Your _____ should always be turned off.

DOWN

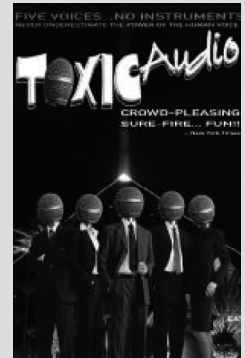
- _____ on time.
- If you are unsure of when to clap, clap when _____ do.
- Clap at the end of a _____.
- Never eat or _____ unless refreshments are sold in the theater.
- Pay attention during the production. Even if you are not interested, sit _____ to avoid disturbing others.
- Always remember to _____ yourself.
- Do not _____ along at an opera or musical.

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TOXIC AUDIO

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 9
10:30 AM

EVENING PERFORMANCE

WEDNESDAY
APRIL 9
7:00 PM

ANSWERS TO
“Check Out What You've Learned”

- Rockapella
- Churches
- Great Depression
- Barbershop
- Polio
- Themusican
- Supremecourt
- Yesterday
- Civilrights
- Loudmouth

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ADD SOME DRAMA

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